



## THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

### ADDRESSING CITIZENS' CONCERNS

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3 SEPTEMBER 2011

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**2100 ADA  
Disability Summit &  
Expo**

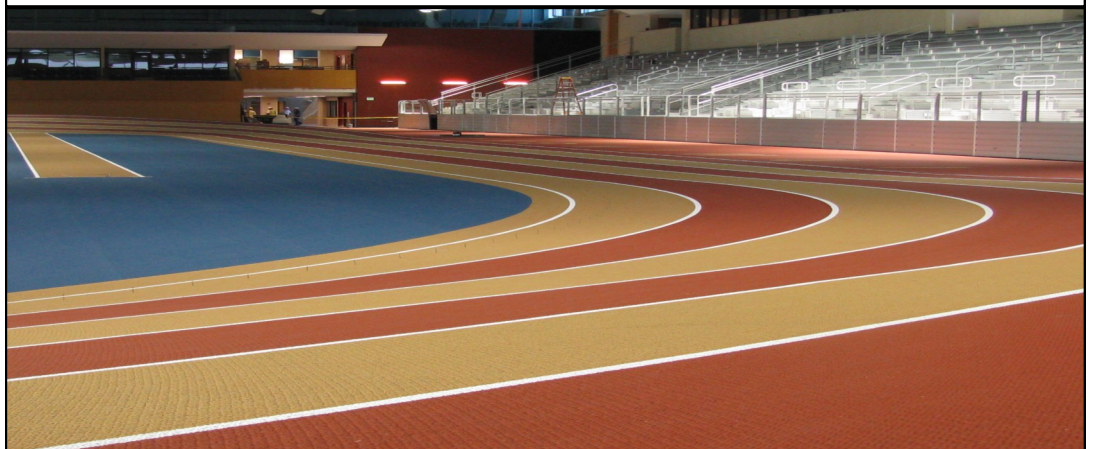
#### SAVE THE DATE

**Sept. 8, 2011**

**Fair Park Arena  
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM**

Who should attend?

*Persons with disabilities, caregivers, advocates and anyone wanting to know more about disabilities.*



On August 20, 2011, the city of Birmingham held the grand opening of the long anticipated Birmingham Crossplex facility. The new multipurpose athletic facility will include an array of features, but most awaited is the Olympic size swimming pool and fastest hydraulically operated indoor track in the world. The grand opening calibration featured the city's local high school marching bands, esteemed guests, and other athletes. Mayor William A. Bell, Sr., led the parade, and alongside Mayor Bell were some of the top wheelchair athletes in the state.

This new facility, which is ADA accessible, is already buzzing with the excitement. Some of the accessible features are priority parking and accessible routes that leads to electronically operated doors. Once inside, visitors have access to concessions, fully compliant restrooms, and locker rooms.

Accessible seating is located throughout the facility for persons with disabilities so there are no bad seats. Wheelchair user will be able to sit and watch a track meet or swimming event as a spectator among the crowd. A portable lift is also on site for any athletes with disabilities that need the accommodation to access the Olympics swimming pool.

Molly McGregor, Project Manager, Office of the Mayor for Crossplex states "The Birmingham Crossplex will open up a world of opportunity for athletes of all abilities and spectators who will not only see but experience the thrill of competition and is one of the finest municipal facilities of this type in the world."

## Addressing Citizens' Concerns

### 2011 Extraordinary Arts for Extraordinary Kids Event



Wade Event Photography

Participants and their families showed up from a number of areas in Central Alabama just to take part, and they were treated to a fantastic time. The Birmingham Museum On Saturday, July 16, 2011, the Mayor's Office on ADA held its 2nd "Extraordinary Arts for Extraordinary Kids" in Birmingham's downtown Linn Park.

This event is held so that children with disabilities can be given the opportunity to come out to the park and have a day of art and other activities. Most importantly, they had a day that was centered around them. With the help of partners such as the Department of Youth Services, Brookwood Hospital, Children's Rehab. Services, Yarbrough Concessions, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and a host of others. The Birmingham Museum of Art offered special tours just for the participants and then es-

corted back to the park where they were given an easel and their own canvas to create their own works of art. The kids were also able to see and, learn about, array of animals brought by the Birmingham City Zoo. As an additional bonus, there was a mounted police officer and his horse in attendance as well as a fire truck for the kids to explore. Due to the participation of everyone coming together for the greater good, this event was an incredible success. When everything was said and done, all the children left this event with a knowledge of art, their own works of art that they created, and a budding desire to continue a path of creativity.

### Questions Concerning Disability; Ask the White House

Each month, members of the White House Domestic Policy Council and Office of Public Engagement who work on disability issues host a public, live-captioned conference call to keep the public better informed of important disability issues and to connect you to the leaders who work on disability policies in the federal government. Over the past several months, these calls have featured discussions on accessibility, employment, education, technology, emergency preparedness, transportation, healthcare and the budget, just to name a few. The Secretaries of Education and Transportation and other senior Administration officials have participated on calls.

The White House is now offering everyone the opportunity to suggest the topics discussed on the monthly disability calls and/or the speakers who participate. Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy, writes, "We want to hear from you." Starting in September and over the next few months, where feasible, these monthly calls will attempt to address issues that the public identify as well as schedule speakers from whom you want to hear. Please complete the below form to submit your suggestion. All White House Disability Group calls are off the record and not for press purposes.

For more information, please contact Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy: [info@messages.whitehouse.gov](mailto:info@messages.whitehouse.gov)

Or go to: <https://www.disability.gov/WHQuestion>

## 2011 Alabama Disability Summit & Expo



Thursday, September 8, 2011, the Mayor's Office of ADA, the Alabama Disability Advocacy Network (ALDAN), the Governor's Office on Disabilities (GOOD), and others agencies have come together to host the 2011 Alabama Disability Summit and Expo.

The Summit and EXPO will feature speakers and an interactive panel discussions on topics which include disaster preparedness, assistive technology, updates on the Americans with Disabilities Act, and an opportunity to network with others in the field of disabilities to share information and learn.

Governor Bentley, Mayor William A. Bell Sr., and others have been invited along with additional local disability and advocacy leaders. During the event, attendees can take time to browse the EXPO displays that will feature local vendors such as HDS Vans and Mobility, Alabama Department of Rehab. Services, Hickory Nut Kennels, and more. The summit will be held at Birmingham's Fair Park

Arena from 8:30am until 4:30pm. This year's Disability Expo and summit is sure to have something for everyone and is sure to a great experience for all who attend.

## Birmingham Partners to Help the Future of the City's Disabled Youth

During the summer, the City of Birmingham partnered with the Alabama Department of Rehab Services and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind to give young individuals an opportunity to work and learn from utilizing a well earned intern position. This summer the city had two interns, Anthony J. Robinson and Akorie Uduma that worked with Jerry Brooks in the City of Birmingham's Equipment Management Facility. When asked if there were any communication obstacles, it was said that for a short period of time, Anthony, who is deaf in one ear, would listen to directions and relay them in sign language to Akorie, who is totally deaf. However, after both young men reached a comfort level, they each had to fulfill separate tasks. Anthony was able to communicate verbally; however, Akorie had to make sure that he carried a pen and pad to communicate with the other workers through written messages.

In addition to learning how to adjust to a working environment, they were also issued bus passes so they could learn and take advantage of the city's accessible public transportation. They both took to the system and used city busses to get back and forth to their summer intern positions.

Both individuals learned a great deal from their experience, and it was said that they would both like to continue in this field. It is because of programs and partnerships, such as this, that the youth of Birmingham, despite having a disability, can learn a trade and have a fair opportunity for a future career.



**Left to Right:** Akorie Uduma, Jerry Brooks, and Anthony J. Robinson



**We are on the web!**

**Mayor's Office On  
American with Disabilities**

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**The ADA Committee meets every  
Second Friday, 10:00 AM 2nd Floor  
City Hall Rm. 215**



## **ADA Advisory Committee**

Chair – John Duplessis—Easter Seals, Navigator Program

Vice Chair - Lorne Kelly—MAX Transit (VIP Para transit)

### **Committee Members**

Xaveria Anderson- Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2007

Trisstun Burrows - Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005

Evon Black – Alabama Department of Rehab Services

Twanna Carter-VA Medical Center

LaWanda East – Pastor, King of Faith Outreach Ministry

Shirley Hollis-Manager, Birmingham Parks & Recreation Centers

Tina K. Hughes – Chronic Illness Advocacy

Dan Kessler-Director, Independent Living Resources, Birmingham

Mike Norris- Independent Living Resources/Greater Birmingham

Charles Priest - Director, Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Alice Sanders-United Cerebral Palsy

Graham Sisson- ADA State Coordinator, Alabama Rehabilitation

Ron Talley- ASSISTECH Group

Peggy Turner – The Lakeshore Foundation

## **The Debt Ceiling and Our Benefits**



A bipartisan deal to reduce the nation's deficit and avoid default was reached on July 31, 2011. If this agreement had not been reached, there was a good chance that Social Security checks, Veteran's checks, and disability checks would have all been placed on a hold. In addition, this crisis would have affected other programs which provide support for people with disabilities, such as affordable housing, education, and rehabilitation services.

The law creates a process in which the first step is to raise the debt ceiling by \$900 billion through February. This initial increase is offset by a cap to discretionary spending for Fiscal Years 2012

and 2013. The cap does not include any new taxes or specific cuts to Medicare or Medicaid programs. It goes on to say that in 2013 the cap will not include any new taxes or specific cuts to Medicare or Medicaid programs.